namely, a more complete national control of the whole of our shipping. This, incidentally, involved the question of the profits earned by British ship-owners. Against these profits there had been a good deal of public outcry. As the demands on shipping grew, and the progress of requisitioning for Government work diminished the amount of tonnage available for general commerce, the competition of shippers all over the world had forced up freights to surprising heights. Thus at the end of 1913 the freight rate for grain from the Plate to the United Kingdom had been 12s. 6d. At the end of 1915 it was 115s. and by the end of 1916 it had risen to 145s. Similarly, the rate for coal from Cardiff to Port Said, which at the end of 1913 had averaged 75s. 9d., rose to 62s. 6d. by the end of 1915 and to 80s. in 1916. The rates for carrying in requisitioned ships was fixed by the Government and restricted to a scale. As I have already pointed out, there was thus a grossly unfair discrimination in favour of those ships and shipowners who had successfully eluded requisition.

Problem of high freights

These high freights of course tended to force up prices—already only too much inclined to rise through other causes. And the public who were called upon to make sacrifices for the sake of their native land were angry when they became painfully aware that their necessities were getting dearer, largely owing to

the rapacity of certain shipowners. There was no justification in war risks for these inflated rates. The Government insurance covered losses at sea, and wages had not increased to anything like that extent. The added risk to life did not extend to the owners. It was a scandalous example of war profiteering.

Such was the state of things which drove me to the